

# MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

November 12, 2024

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:29 p.m. on November 12, 2024.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Canape	
Michelle Mize	
Casey Wheeler	Irv Wilke
Richard Klose	Jodi Mackay

## COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Heidi Sparks	Jessica Banks
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## OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

Britney Harakal, Administrative Assistant

Mayor Waggoner led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

## MINUTES:

Motion by Council Member Wilke to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 22, 2024, as presented, seconded by Council Member Mize. With no objection, the minutes of the regular meeting of October 22, 2024, as presented, were approved. There was no public comment or Council discussion.

## CORRESPONDENCE:

- Fire Monthly Report – October 2024
- Police Monthly Report – October 2024
- Resignation Letter from LuAnne Engh on Tree Board

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

## CONSENT ITEMS:

- **Claims entered through November 8, 2024.**  
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 10/27/2024 totaling \$272,978.86.**
- **Clerk/Treasurer Financial Statements for the month of September 2024.**
- **Clerk/Treasurer Financial Statements for the month of October 2024.**
- **Council Workshop Minutes of November 4, 2024.**

The Mayor asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Council Member Wilke. With no objection, the Consent Agenda of November 12, 2024, as presented, were approved. There was no public comment or Council discussion.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

## REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of October 22, 2024.
- Emergency Services Committee Minutes of September 23, 2024.
- Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of October 21, 2024.

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Council Minutes of November 12, 2024

- Cemetery Commission Minutes of October 15, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of April 9, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of May 21, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of June 11, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of July 9, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of August 13, 2024.
- Library Board Minutes of September 13, 2024.
- Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of November 4, 2024.
- Public Works Committee Minutes of October 21, 2024.
- Tree Board Minutes of October 3, 2024.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):**

- Tom Becker, 1009 US Highway 10 W, thanked the Public Works Department for fixing the culvert that was causing flooding on his property.

**SCHEDULED MATTERS:** None.

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA:** None.

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT):** None.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

Council Member Mackay noted that she will be absent from the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting and would like to be present for the vote regarding the CAO.

Council Member Mize read the attached statement into the record.

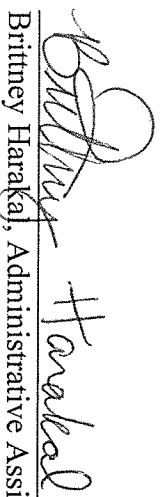
**MAYOR UPDATES:** None.

**UNSCHEDULED MATTERS:** None.

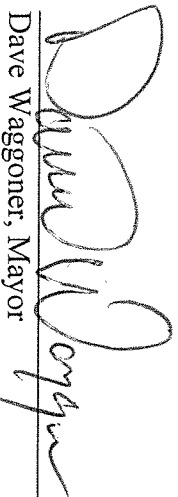
**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Council Member Mackay to adjourn the council meeting, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

There being no further business to come before the council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

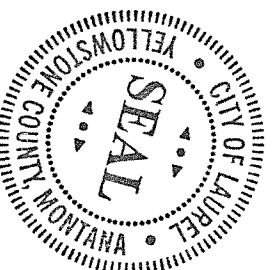
  
Britney Haraka, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024.

  
Dave Waggoner, Mayor

Attest:

  
Kelly Streaker, Clerk/Treasurer



**Brittney Harakal**

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**From:** Ward 2B  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2024 6:57 PM  
**To:** Brittney Harakal  
**Subject:** tonight's comment for the record

I want to state for the record tonight my concerns regarding the appointment of an acting CAO without consulting with the Council. It happened abruptly. We were not given a chance to discuss. If the city even wants a CAO. How are we supposed to have a discussion next week and weigh our concerns when the decision has already been made. It presupposes an outcome from us. It is UNACCEPTABLE to treat City Council like a rubber stamp. Allowing someone to act in a role that has not been approved is confusing and I worry His time served will be used against us when we are finally allowed to vote on this issue- which will be at minimum 4 weeks after he was instated.

Did Something happen that required this to be pushed through? If so, past practice is that in the event of an emergency the chain of command is to have the City Council President fill that role until a permanent replacement can be installed. When Mayor Tom Nelson was hospitalized then Council President Emilee Eaton was appointed as acting mayor. – President Sparks is not here tonight, but she did not indicate that she was given the option to fill the role as is proper and, as stated before, past practice.

To call this position interim gives the impression that we were already planning to hire someone but hadn't decided WHO. This is not the case. The role of CAO has been vacant for 8 years. The last time the city decided not to rehire a CAO the mayor absorbed many of the job's duties, and the CAO salary was removed from the city budget. The mayor at that time got a major raise because he was taking on these duties. Is the mayor now prepared to give back that money?

I have major financial concerns. It is the Council's job to set the budget. We did so in August. At that time no one mentioned recreating this position or budgeting for it. The email we received did not give any details regarding promised compensation, but we have to assume it was discussed, and we were not a part of it. The City Council has always held the power of the purse. To assume otherwise is to attempt to steal power from a COEQUAL branch of government. Now that this 'situation' has landed in our laps, how is the city of laurel supposed to come up with the money? I know I don't need to remind the council and citizens of Laurel that we are already struggling to fund a fire engine, water infrastructure, and as always our street maintenance. Furthermore, we have critical and long vacant positions going unfilled under this administration, that need addressing long before we need a CAO.